

supply these weapons to terrorist allies, then the attacks of September the 11th would be a prelude to far greater horrors.

If we meet our responsibilities, if we overcome this danger, we can arrive at a very different future. The people of Iraq can shake off their captivity. They can one day join a democratic Afghanistan and a democratic Palestine, inspiring reforms throughout the Muslim world. These nations can show by their example that honest government and respect for women and the great Islamic tradition of learning can triumph in the Middle East and beyond. And we will show that the promise of the United Nations can be fulfilled in our time.

Neither of these outcomes is certain. Both have been set before us. We must choose between a world of fear and a world of progress. We cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather. We must stand up for our security and for the permanent rights and the hopes of mankind. By heritage and by choice, the United States of America will make that stand. And delegates to the United Nations, you have the power to make that stand as well.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and General Assembly President Jan Kavan of the United Nations; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Yuli Vorontsov, High-Level Coordinator for the Return of Missing Property and Missing Persons from Iraq to Kuwait; missing American pilot Lt. Comdr. Michael S. Speicher, USN; former President George Bush; and Amir al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah of Kuwait. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan in New York City September 12, 2002

President Bush. Mr. President, it's great to see you again. Thank you for your leadership.

Our Government believes you're doing a really fine job of setting a vision for the Afghan people and leading towards that vision,

that you love freedom and that you are working hard to make your country more secure. And we appreciate your leadership. We also appreciate your understanding that jobs are important for your country. And today I had the honor of informing President Karzai that the United States, along with Saudi Arabia and Japan, will be providing \$180 million for road improvement projects in Afghanistan. We'll help develop a modern infrastructure so that the Afghan entrepreneur will be able to move product from one city to the next and so that people will be able to find work; people will be able to put food on the table.

Our commitment to a stable and free and peaceful Afghanistan is a long-term commitment, Mr. President, and we're confident in your leadership. And I want to thank you again. It's good to see you again.

President Hamid Karzai. Thank you. Good to see you.

Well, Mr. President, I'm very happy to be meeting with you again, after the meeting in January. We are, as before, very, very grateful for the help the United States of America gave to Afghanistan to liberate itself from the scourge, from the occupation of terrorism that murdered and killed and destroyed our country for so many years, that brought about the disaster in New York and your own country. The Afghan people continue to share that pain with you. And I came here earlier than the General Assembly to participate, to mourn that date. And we've had a commemoration of that in Kabul as well, yesterday.

The Afghan people know the help that you have given to us, and the Afghan people will know the announcement that you've just made. They'll be very happy. Mr. President, I assure you that you will find the Afghan people as your very best partners in the fight against terrorism. And as your very best partners wherever you bring justice in this part of the world, we'll be with you. The Afghan people, as you rightly say, would like to have some bread on their table, and they would also like to, in some time, to make that bread themselves, to earn it themselves.

So the help that you are giving us to have our highways, to have other infrastructure correct in the country is a step in the right

direction towards self-reliance in Afghanistan. And I must thank you very much once again.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. at the United States Mission at the United Nations Headquarters. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Joint Statement on Road Construction in Afghanistan by the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Japan, and the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia
September 12, 2002

Since the horrific events of September 11, 2001, the Governments of the United States, Japan, and Saudi Arabia have worked together both on ridding the world of the scourge of terrorism and, following the success of Operation Enduring Freedom, supporting Afghanistan's Transitional Administration, led by President Hamid Karzai. With Japan, our joint work on this endeavor grows from the close bilateral relationship that has long existed between our peoples and our governments as reflected in the U.S.-Japan Partnership for Security and Prosperity, based on our shared values, mutual trust and friendship, reaffirmed at Camp David in June 2001. Similarly, the United States and Saudi Arabia have built a strong bilateral relationship over the past 60 years based on mutual trust and respect and a common vision of a just, peaceful, and prosperous world.

In November 2001, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Japan foresaw the need for the community of nations effectively to plan how to provide humanitarian relief and reconstruction for Afghanistan as the Taliban fell from power. This culminated in the Tokyo Pledging Conference in January 2002, which yielded 4.5 billion dollars in pledges to finance Afghanistan's humanitarian and reconstruction needs over the next five years.

Our governments have acted as leaders in the international community to address the humanitarian needs of Afghanistan, including

repatriation and resettlement of refugees and the internally displaced.

While these challenges continue, it is now time for the international community to take strong, visible steps to begin Afghanistan's physical reconstruction. Traditionally, Afghanistan's key unifying transportation artery has been the road connecting Kabul in the east to Herat in the west. This is the key link in Afghanistan's "ring road" which also connects its northern provinces with the capital.

To launch the reconstruction of this key transportation network, which now lies in ruins, the United States, Japan, and Saudi Arabia are committing today to reconstruct the road from Kabul, through Kandahar, to Herat to international standards. We invite others to join us in this project. But to make clear our determination, the United States is today committing eighty million dollars toward this project, Japan is committing fifty million dollars focusing its effort on the road from Kabul to Kandahar, and Saudi Arabia is also committing fifty million dollars. Taken together, this initial funding alone should complete the bulk of this roadway.

Because it is essential for Afghanistan's people to see the fruits of their government's work and the commitment of Saudi Arabia, Japan and the United States made real, we intend to begin initial construction before winter sets in and will make every effort to complete the entire highway—from Kabul to Kandahar to Herat—within thirty-six months.

We intend to use this project to foster opportunity for economic growth and prosperity in Afghanistan. It is our belief that this road, along with others that will connect Afghanistan to its neighbors north and south, can set the stage for a complete transportation system, the lowering of tariff and other barriers to trade, and the establishment of links through Afghanistan from the Indian Ocean to Central Asia and from the Caspian Basin to the Far East. With this vision in mind, we look forward to the day that Afghanistan regains its place along the "Silk Road" connecting East and West in a highway of mutual understanding, commerce, and peace.